R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 010 961 RC 000 503

EVALUATION OF TITLE III-B MIGRANT PROJECT OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN COLLIER COUNTY, FLORIDA

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PUB DATE 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.64 16P.

DESCRIPTORS- *MIGRANT EDUCATION, *MIGRANT CHILDREN, MIGRANT WORKERS, *MIGRANT SCHOOLS, SOCIAL DISADVANTAGEMENT, *EDUCATIONAL RETARDATION, NEIGHBORHOOD, *ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES, COLLIER COUNTY, FLORIDA

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS OF, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO, THE COLLIER COUNTY SCHOOLS' TITLE III-B MIGRANT PROGRAM. HE DISCUSSES THE SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, CLASSES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES WHICH ARE HELPING MIGRANT CHILDREN ACHIEVE SELF-FULFILLMENT. THE AUTHOR RECOMMENDS THAT THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS BE IMPLEMENTED--ANALYSIS AND EVALUATIONS OF THE SPECIAL CLASSES AND PROGRAMS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES OF THE MIGRANT WORKERS, AN INCREASE OF COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOLS, AND A MORE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. (JH)

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EVALUATION OF

TITLE III-B MIGRANT PROJECT
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

IN COLLIER COUNTY, FLORIDA

by

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Dates of visit: September 19, 20, and 21, 1966

Introduction

This report contains the observations made by the writer of the Collier County Schools' Title III-B Migrant Program. A total of three days was spent visiting the schools and communities of Immokalee, Everglades, and Naples; three urban areas of Collier County all located approximately forty miles from one another.

Immokalee and Everglades are heavily populated by the socially disadvantaged with only Immokalee significantly affected by the migrant population.

Visits were made to nine schools in the three above communities along with an inspection of the neighborhoods in which these schools are located. Inspection of approximately ten labor camps in Immokalee was made; discussions with all nine principals and other supervisory and administrative staff

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

RC 000 503

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were held. Numerous teachers, children, and parents were interviewed; a careful analysis of the remedial educational programs and educational supportative services of a social and cultural nature was made; and finally, staff meetings, subcommittees, and general group sessions were attended.

Overview

The educational problems associated with the migrant child are indeed unique and perhaps underscore a special dimension even within the spectrum of the socially disadvantaged at large. For example, the Highlands Elementary School of Immokalee begins with a September enrollment of approximately 700 children from permanent resident families. As the migrant worker enters the community this initial enrollment will increase to approximately 1,300 by February and decline to the original figure at the end of the school year. Furthermore, the migrant child falls farther and farther behind as each school year passes because of the constant change in the schools. This forces the school to develop remedial educational programs of vast proportions. There are innumerable other factors which militate against the school's successful achievement of its stated task: Poor health or diet that drains the pupil's energy; poor housing that inhibits the formation of satisfactory study habits; and a drab, sullen neighborhood which fails to assist in the activation of his intellectual potentiality.

The present funds for educational and supportive services made available under Title III are barely, if at all, capable of meeting elementary needs and do not provide for critically needed expansion into new areas of opportunities.

The Collier County Schools are clearly engaged in the task of changing behavior in order to increase the self-sufficiency and enhance the self-fulfillment of its pupils in socially useful directions. There is a sincere effort, through the utilization of various programs, to reach those students whose behavior differs from that required by the organizational demands of the classroom and school building, and to avoid the kinds of instructional systems that tend to contribute to the creation of hostility and attitudes of hopelessness. Although there are signs of individual and community apathy, there are significant positive indications that the Migrant Project is working very well and is receiving the cooperation not only of the local agencies but also the area's residents. For example, the preliminary results of the various remedial educational programs suggest that the level of achievement of participants is appreciably raised; the enormous participation in the adult education program at Immokalee High School is in large measure stimulated by the presence of the Migrant Project; there exists a "self-build" home owner program which was also stimulated by the Migrant program; the channels of communication which

have been opened between the parents and school officials; and above all, the glimmer of hope detected in the face of the socially disadvantaged child and his parents because they are receiving special attention from a group of humble professionals. Admittedly, the final point defies objectivity; nevertheless, this was perhaps the observer's most encouraging moment of the entire visit.

The size and number of special classes dealing with remedial reading, writing, and arithmetic have been instituted in accordance with need within each school. The basis and general procedures for selecting pupils assigned to such classes need to be more clearly identified; however, it is evident that these special classes are not simply a "dumping ground" for all or most of the unruly or otherwise difficult-to-manage pupils.

The special classes are academically ungraded, but the pupils assigned to them do fall within grade level limits. Many of these students have had a history of academic failure, and undoubtedly school has not been the source of many satisfactions for these youngsters. It is also suggested that the curriculum of the special classes does deal with the fundamentals of school work and that it is organized in such a way that the pupils proceed largely on an individual basis, with a reasonable prospect of frequent, although in some instances

small, successes in their school work. The classes are sufficiently small (10-15 students) so that the teacher may work effectively with each child on an individual basis. There appeared to be a reasonable range of appropriately graded and readily available instructional materials provided.

The majority of the teachers considered some type of incentive system imperative for success in the program. For example, many stated that they inform their students early and often that adequate completion of specified educational tasks would result in grade advancement at the end of the school year. Several further reported that once the pupil places confidence in this promise, then academic productivity is enhanced and general problems of classroom management are reduced. This example is given only to demonstrate the manner in which several teachers employ some type of incentive system rather than emphasizing the narrower issue of technique.

The majority of teachers of the special classes are selected from the present staff of the respective schools in which the classes are organized. The teachers employed with federal funds in these cases substitute in the regular classroom in order to relieve the experienced teachers for special classes. Such selection of teachers offers the advantage of assuring that the children with the greatest need will be taught by the most skillful teachers. Secondly, these teachers

function as integrated members of the faculty, and thereby reduce the possibility that the special class will become socially isolated from the total school.

The analysis of the supportive services presents a somewhat different picture in quality and quantity from that of the educational services described above. It is difficult to separate the importance of supportive services from those of an educational nature in upgrading the functional level of the cultural disadvantaged.

Budgetary limitations necessitate a minimum amount of attention which can be devoted to the accompanying health, social, recreational, etc., problems of the schools' pupils and their families. The social workers and community block workers are doing a commendable job in relation to their small number; but this falls far short of the job that needs to be done in the dissemination of health information to families, in following up and determining the cause of absenteeism, in directing students and parents to appropriate community agencies for various help, in the generation of family participation in school programming, in the organization of clubs, associations, etc., to upgrade the community in general, to assist the migrant in becoming a non-migrant, and in other ways too numerous to mention. In summary, there is a clear need to expand the supportive services to such an extent that

the school will be able to deal with the child as a total individual rather than an educational entity. It is not suggested that the school usurp the authority of the parent or move into direct service in the health, social, and employment areas which lie outside of its competency; however, the school is in a position to act as a referral and directing agent to the other community agencies. To this extent it must have an adequate program of supportive services. Also, to this extent it will maximize its educational goals in reference to the handicapped child.

The remaining content of this report will deal with suggestions for evaluating the Migrant Project, followed by recommendations.

Indicators of Analysis - Special Classes

Systematic and continuous evaluation of the special classes should be made, and this evaluation should examine the curriculum of the classes and the academic progress of the students. The evaluation should include special and detailed attention to the personal and societal adjustment of pupils as reflected by the reports of the teachers, test scores, and behavior of the pupils in the community. Specifically, the evaluation of special classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic could include:

1. Comparison of school achievement before and after six-months participation in the remedial training programs. Due to the mobility of the migrant worker it may be necessary to reduce the interval to three-months periods.

2. A comparison of children who have participated in a remedial program at the end of every three or six months with a control group of children who did not need such help.

3. Analysis of family background as an independent variable and correlate with initial level of achievement and at the end of specified time intervals.

4. An advancement record to reflect the progress of each youth against standards of proficiency and behavior, utilizing both a check list and narrative report by the leader following a designated time interval.

5. Record of attendance and participation in the special class, to aid in evaluating the degree of program acceptance by the youth.

6. Attitude tests before and after a specified time in the special class.

7. Interview with the students as a group and individually at the beginning and after a specified period of time in the special classes.

8. Narrative reports of all concerned professional staff after a designated period of time, and subsequently by social workers, community block workers, etc. These reports should include specific statements of a set of agreed upon standards of behavior and evidence of individual compliance.

9. Appraisal by and of the teachers to determine the adequacy of program structure, materials, methods, and training program in general.

10. Maintenance of a by-name file on each student who is a participant in the special class. These cards may be used to reflect the teacher's

observations on the individual's participation, behavior, proficiency, and advancement or regression.

11. Composite evaluation of all groups in all special classes on an annual basis (and at several points during the year) will provide a broad base for appraisal of the overall program.

Indicators of Analysis - Supportive Services

Supportive services are usually designed to increase citizen participation, utilization of services, and the coordination of program and can be evaluated by using some of the following methods:

A. Citizen Participation

1. Increase in the number and strength of citizen associations.

2. The number and types of individuals that are greatly involved in these citizen activities.

3. The degree and type of change of individual attitudes and knowledge regarding the neighborhood and local community wide leaders. (If possible, this method will lend itself nicely to a before and after attitude and knowledge survey.)

4. Before-and-after indications of cooperation and participation of parents in programs to help their children.

B. Utilization of Services

1. A series of before-and-after studies of agency records and staff experiences regarding the numbers and types of clients requesting assistance.

2. A simple sample survey of the resident's

knowledge, attitudes, and actual use of local institutional services.

C. Coordination of Program

1. Observations and before-and-after studies of clients and agency staff to determine the type and degree of changes in program and policies.

2. Studies and evaluations to compare the effectiveness of program coordination in Immokalee and Everglades with that of Naples.

Recommendations

Following are recommendations based on the writer's three days of observation. Liberty has been taken to record all suggestions that appear to have some merit while recognizing there exists a lack of knowledge as to the administrative feasibility of acceptance.

1. There is a need for a team of behavioral scientists to study the social and cultural implications of the residents, particularly the migrant worker, in the Immokalee area. There are five cultural groups residing in this community. They are Spanish-speaking Americans, Negroes, Caucasians, Puerto Ricans, and Indians. Unquestionably, an understanding of the cultural patterns of these groups would enhance any community action envisioned, including that of the formal and informal education of youth and adults.

2. As much as possible, mobile units should become an integral part of the educational programs. Because of the location of various community neighborhoods such as crowded labor camps, it would help if some provision were made for dispatching vehicles carrying library materials, recreational equipment, medical supplies, etc. into these communities. The school could take the initiative

in the encouragement of the appropriate institutions to provide such services in all program aspects outside of its authority.

3. Those schools in Collier County in which the migrant children are most heavily concentrated should, with the help of government and state agencies, make an effort to determine the dimensions of the migrant stream and identify their positions with respect to that stream. The primary purpose of such efforts would be to establish a relationship with all other schools in the migrant stream from or to which their respective migrant students will either be "coming" or "going". Even though a school cannot determine exactly where the migrant workers will travel to or come from, an assessment of the total stream may reveal that most come and go to a particular group of schools. If the various schools would attempt to coordinate their efforts, this could reduce the yearly "falling behind" effect experienced by the migrant child.

4. To assist the staff of existing agencies, through the formation of committees, in understanding the strategy of intervention by their direct involvement in diagnosing the particular needs, values, and resources of the student and adult population of the disadvantaged areas.

5. To increase among the local staff the degree of communication and shared concern for more effective integration of community services and educational programs. Secondly, to assist the staff members of other agencies in the understanding that the solution to educational problems are vital to the communities' family situation and condition.

6. To expand the present activities related to the seeking out and assistance in, the provision of educational services and opportunities to those children and families who are reluctant for various reasons to utilize opportunities that are available.

7. To establish an extensive central record file on those pupils and families having needs and who are being served by several agencies in addition to the school. These records should be coordinated with those maintained by other agencies serving the family. A special classification system should be established for maintaining records and data in order to facilitate the efforts of the maximum program.

8. On-the-job training in the simple skills of home repair and improvement, such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, roofing, and other building trades would fit naturally into the already existing vocational education program. The communities of Immokalee and Everglades contain a large number of dilapidated and deteriorating housing units. Since many of these homes are owned by persons too poor to afford the necessary maintanence and repairs, the improvement of these houses would not constitute competition with private industry and would serve as an excellent work-experience project for youth. Such a training program could also be broadened to electrical, automotive mechanic, and auto body repair. Areas of food service and health fields could also be included for the young girls.

9. The establishment of a transitional facility to reduce the tremendous rate of high school dropouts among the migrant youth. There may be the development of a center and curriculum which would exclusively be concerned with the potential dropout, trying to attract back those students who would not feel out of place in returning to such a training program. This can best be accomplished with the help of a work-study program funded by the Federal government since all other sources of funds are exhausted.

10. To facilitate the effectiveness of the school program by encouraging parents and youth to develop specific programs that will meet their real needs and aspirations.

11. To further develop and greatly expand the various supportive services designed to direct parents and children to the proper health, social, and recreational institutions.

12. To step up the efforts in the recruiting of indigenous leaders for participation in and giving leadership to the various supported and self-help programs.

13. To carry out the intentions of establishing a working relationship with a University for the participation in a National Teacher Corps training program.

14. To continue and expand employment opportunities for young parents as aides to assure family income so older children can remain in school. For this same reason, student employment from 16-22 must be continued and expanded.

Conclusion

It would be grossly unfair if the writer did not include in this report a commendation to such a fine staff responsible for the execution of the various programs discussed. This applies equally to the permanent faculty and administrative staff as it does to the federally funded staff. From the community block worker up to and including the Superintendent of Schools, and extraordinary cooperative, sincere, hard-working group of people were found. Rarely does one find in the area of the disadvantaged such a high percentage of staff members of such exceptionally high qualities and capabilities. The only staff limitation observed was that there are so few members in relation to the many stiff problems facing them. It is clearly and emphatically stated that these people are attempting to deal with a combination of socio-cultural problems

which are absolutely staggering, and they are doing so with a firm conviction and determined desire to help any way possible all the children of Collier County in the most straightforward and honorable fashion imaginable. A complete grasp of the energy and dedication of these school principals, teachers, coordinators, supervisors, etc. is perhaps incomprehensible without seeing them in action.